

**On Wednesday, November 4, 2009, Congressman Bishop delivered the following remarks at the launch event for the Congressional Military Family Caucus:**

Good morning and welcome to the kick-off of the bipartisan Military Family Caucus. The well-being of our military families has long been an important issue to me. My Congressional District is home to both Fort Benning in Columbus, Georgia, and the Marine Corps Logistics Base in Albany, Georgia, so I am privileged to count thousands of military families among my constituency. Therefore, it is my great honor to serve as co-Chair of this very important Caucus that seeks to be the voice in Congress for America's military families.

I want to thank my colleague and co-Chair of this Caucus Congresswoman Cathy McMorris-Rodgers. As the wife of a 26-year retired Navy pilot, she knows first-hand of the sacrifice our military families make in service to our country. I also want to thank my colleagues who are in attendance this morning, especially the more than 70 of you who have signed up to be part of the Military Family Caucus. We look forward to working with each of you.

I would also like to thank Admiral Mike Mullen, Chairman of the Joints Chiefs of Staff, for joining us this morning. I know that the challenges facing our military families are of vital importance to Admiral Mullen and I commend him for all he has done and continues to do on behalf of our military families.

Often we recognize the sacrifices that our members of the military make without being fully aware of the tremendous hardships that their families must endure. My wife grew up in a military family and has shared with me the challenges she faced being the child of a service member. Today it could be the grandparent, the aunt or the uncle who is left behind to care for the child while the parent is deploying overseas. The long absences, back-to-back yearlong deployments, the frequent transfers that disrupt childhood friendships, the missed birthdays and football games, and the anxiety that comes with having a loved one deployed in harms way are just a few of the trials that military families face today.

We formed the Military Family Caucus to honor the commitment and increasing sacrifice our military families make everyday. We want to shine a light on the special challenges they face with regard to such issues as healthcare, education, jobs, housing, and child care. All of us here today—individually and collectively— have worked tirelessly to address some of the issues that impact our military families. All of us have served on committees and subcommittees of jurisdiction, many have a military presence in our districts, and all of us have constituents who proudly serve in the military. This year, for example, we worked to ensure that substantial resources are being provided for—military mental health care, medical facility maintenance, the modernization of troop housing facilities, and the implementation of support services to assist families affected by BRAC.

There is still work to be done – specifically on studying the effects of PTSD, the impact of back-to-back deployments on families, marriages, and mental health, as well as the impact that constant re-stationing has on education, spousal employment, and children's well-being.

That's where the Military Family Caucus comes in. We look forward to continuing to research

and identify those concerns in a bipartisan way that impact military families, educating our colleagues on these key issues, and developing ways to address and resolve them. We fully understand that the strength of our military is drawn from the strength of their families and we want to do all we can to protect our warriors and their loved ones.

In closing, I want to thank our military family members and tell each of you how deeply we appreciate the sacrifices you make while your loved ones are fighting for our freedom. It is my sincere hope that the Military Family Caucus can, in some small way, honor your service to our country by telling your stories and working together to address these challenges.